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From the Reference Desk

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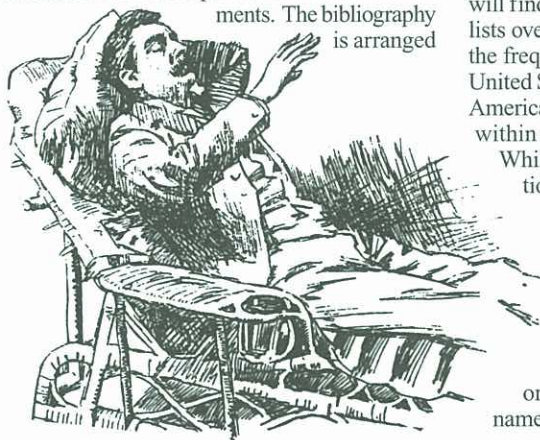
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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

You don't see them being published much anymore, but as the *New York Times Guide to Reference Materials* says, "Finding a good bibliography is like striking gold. With *American Foreign Relations since 1600: A Guide to the Literature* (2003, 1576070808, \$255) ABC-CLIO has just adding another shiny nugget to the collection. Edited by **Robert L. Beisner** and **Kurt W. Hanson** this two-volume set continues and builds on scholarly efforts that go back to the now obsolete *Guide to Diplomatic History of the United States 1775-1921* (1935), and **Richard Dean Burns'** dated *Guide to American Foreign Relations since 1700* (1983). In fact, this set is a "second edition" of **Burns'** work, both being compiled under the auspices of the **Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations**. But the new edition is substantially different. It omits the lengthy, historiographical essays that introduced each chapter in the **Burns'** edition. Instead, this new edition includes over 16,000 entries compared to the 9,000 of the prior edition, and many date from 1983 to the present. All of the entries are annotated with descriptive and evaluative comments. The bibliography is arranged



in 32 chapters, primarily in chronological order. There is a thorough and comprehensive author and editor index, as well as an index of subjects, events, places and areas. Because of the number of entries, the later index must be used in tandem with the table of contents that lists the chapter numbers. Editor **Robert L. Beisner** and his contributors deserve a great deal of credit for their scholarly dedication in producing this very impressive work. *American Foreign Relations since 1600: A Guide to the Literature* is an essential addition to academic libraries supporting courses in the history of American foreign policy and foreign relations. Many individual scholars, feeling that they have struck gold, will be adding it to their personal collections.

There are some reference titles that invite attention, drawing the reader in out of sheer curiosity. **Oxford University Press'** new *Dictionary of American Family Names* (2003, 0195081374, \$348.50) falls into that category. Patrons of both public and academic libraries will find it hard to resist. Editor **Patrick Hanks** lists over 70,000 surnames based on a study of the frequency of surnames, as they exist in the United States. **Hanks** claims that "over 85% of Americans will find an entry for their surname" within the covers of this three-volume set.

While that might be difficult to test, this dictionary is an undeniably, extensive listing of surnames that provides relevant and useful information. Entries contain the language, or culture, of origin, as well as the particular geographic location and original spelling of the surnames. They also include the linguistic history, as well as the typology, or "whether it is derived from a place name, from a nickname, from the personal

name of a forebear or from a word denoting the occupation or social status of a forebear." Forming the foundation of the set are introductory chapters that discuss family names in diverse cultures and languages ranging from Korean to Irish, Russian to Arabic and from Spanish and Portuguese, to Polish.

Readers from experienced genealogists, to students assigned to find the meaning of their family name, to the just plain curious, will find this a useful and fascinating resource. More extensive than sources like the *Penguin Dictionary of Proper Names*, (1991, 0670825735, \$29.95) and the *Cassell Dictionary of Proper Names*, (1994, 0304344478, OP but available via Amazon), the *Dictionary of American Family Names* is a definite purchase where this type information is in demand.

Oxford has also published a single volume work that will have appeal to a number of libraries. The *Dictionary of Buddhism* (2003, 0198605609, \$35) by scholar **Damien Keown** is a handy, reasonably priced book that contains a wealth of information. **Keown** offers definitions of "various concepts, names, texts and terms related to the main traditions of Buddhism. Diverse traditions from "India, south-east Asia, Tibet and East Asia" are fully covered. For readers less familiar with Buddhism "see" and "see also" references are provided that help give context to the doctrine, practices and issues discussed. Other useful features include a chronology, a guide to Buddhist scriptures, and a pronunciation guide.

With more than 2,000 entries, the *Dictionary of Buddhism* is a serious reference work. The definitions are clear, and generally concise, as well as accurate and objective. This book should prove highly useful to scholars and students. It is broader in scope, and more current than related titles like **Scarecrow Press'** *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism* (1993, 0810826984, \$65) and the *Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen* (1997, 1570625204, OP but available via Amazon). The *Dictionary of Buddhism* is appropriate for academic and public libraries and given the price, many will want circulating copies.

Fitzroy Dearborn's recent *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (2003, 1579582478, \$375) brings into focus a genre that is more deserving of attention in scholarly circles. Travel writing often portrays a contrast of cultures premised "on ... opposition between home and elsewhere." Therefore such writing serves to illuminate both the place the writer sees as "home," as well as the place he/she is writing about. Given that such writing has taken place from antiquity to the present, an examination of it offers a lens through which we can study the clash of cultures over time. An encyclopedia like *Literature of Travel and*


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agreement, or membership. Once it is determined the journal issue is unsolicited, a brief bibliographic and serial control record is created in **Unicorn** that is suppressed from public view in the online public catalog. The issue is routed to the appropriate subject selector for review and a decision. When the selector responds, the decision is added to the tracking record. Subsequent issues of the unsolicited journal titles will be processed based on decisions noted in the tracking records. If the decision is to discard and the journal is scholarly in nature, the issue is eventually sent to a back issue dealer to benefit other libraries.

Anecdotal information from staff suggests that very few of the unsolicited journal issues received in the Serials Department result in new subscriptions. Therefore, I question the value

of publishers sending unsolicited issues to acquisition and serial departments as an effective marketing tool.

I have a couple of suggestions for publishers. First of all, why send the sample issues (unless requested) to acquisition and serial departments? Why not only send to the source of purchase recommendations, most often the faculty and subject selectors? At **Penn State**, serial orders are managed in the Serials Department, but the collection decisions are the responsibility of the subject selectors. Secondly, if publishers must send to acquisition and serial departments in hope of eventually reaching the person responsible for the selection decision, please mark the issues as "sample issues" or include a letter indicating the issue is a sample issue. This courtesy will be appreciated by the staff and ensure the sample issues do not end up on the problem shelves. And one last thought, will the rise of e-journals eventually mean the demise of the free print sample issues? 

Exploration serves as a convenient starting point, as well as a valuable guide to such study.

The content of these three volumes is comprehensive. Articles revolve around themes ranging from the geographical like the Arctic exploration and travel in Central Asia, to journey types like pilgrimages and circumnavigation, to specific genres like diaries and memoirs, to contemporary travel writers like **Jan Morris** and **Peter Matthiessen**. There are also articles that discuss travel publishers and publishing, geographical organizations and societies, the relationship of art and science to travel and specific issues like censorship, ethics, Orientalism and women travelers. Each article has its own bibliography, some being fairly extensive, and there is a cumulative book index at the end of the encyclopedia. In fact, good indexing is a strong component of this set. In addition to the book index, there are alphabetical and thematic indexes of the articles, as well as a general index to specific volumes and pages. The set also includes a complete list of contributors with their credentials.

Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia is an informed and useful work. Accessible, yet grounded in scholarship, it will appeal to both fans of travel writing and to the serious student. It is highly recommended for both academic and larger public libraries where there is interest.

Routledge has released a reference book with a somewhat misleading title. *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* (2003, 1579582370, \$150) looks and reads more like a historical handbook. Edited by **Christine Faure**, this title is an English language version of a second edition, French original. It contains 39 scholarly articles in three broad sections. The first section entitled *On the Threshold of Modernity: Are Women Capable of Governing* lays the philosophical foundations with a decidedly European flavor. Articles discuss French Salic Law and women's political and military action during the Fronde, as well as the place of women in the works of religious figures like Luther and Calvin, and political philosophers like Locke, Hobbes and Filmer. The second section, *The Age of Revolutions* discusses the role of women in revolutionary Europe and America from the English Revolution of the 1640's and 1650's through the involvement of women in the Russian Comintern of Lenin and Stalin. The last section, *Struggles for Democracy*, ranges from discussions of women's rights and suffrage in the United States to Turkish immigrant women in Europe, to women under Italian fascism to feminism in the 1970's. The articles are obviously written for an academic audience and are well researched. The bibliographies are thorough, listing sources in a variety of languages, although French and English titles predominate.

While these essays offer valuable insights into interesting and relevant topics, *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women* provides the

reader more of a collection of broadly related articles rather than a unified encyclopedia. This sense is enhanced by the fact that there is no general index offering access to specific information. There is a proper name index and a table of contents but these are no substitute for a general subject index. This book is more appropriate for circulating collections in libraries supporting women's studies programs and those with strong political science collections.

More traditional in structure, and more successful as a reference, is **Routledge's Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy** (2003, 0415939135, \$150). This encyclopedia contains 187 alphabetically arranged entries written by 76 international scholars. Over 10 years in the making, this single-volume work covers the major thinkers, principal schools of thought and significant concepts of Chinese philosophy from antiquity to the modern period. As you would expect, there is substantial coverage of Confucianism and Daoism in a number of related articles but there is also serious consideration of lesser and rival schools like **Mohism** and the **School of Names**. There are also articles that discuss Chinese philosophy as it relates to broader themes like art, change, human nature and knowledge, as well as those on self-deception, ritualism, aesthetics, metaphysics and moral philosophy. Entries on Marxism, Confucianism in the Twentieth Century, Scientism and Humanism and essays on thinkers like **Mao Zedong** and **Mou Zongsan** help bring coverage up to the modern era. This book is intended for students and scholars, but would also be of use to the informed lay reader. A 47-page glossary helps clarify important terms for those less familiar with the Chinese philosophy. Naturally, each entry has a bibliography, as well as "see also" references. And, there is a general index enabling readers to locate specifics. All in all, the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* is a satisfying, scholarly effort that could find a place in either reference, or circulating, collections depending on use and need.

Containing information not readily available elsewhere, **McFarland's Latin American and Caribbean Artists of the Modern Era** (2003, 0786410574, \$115) is a welcome biographical resource. Concentrating on artists of the 19th and 20th centuries, author **Steve Shipp** has put a great deal of effort into identifying individual artists for inclusion in this book. By contacting representatives from art museums and galleries and through personal correspondence with the artists themselves, **Shipp** has compiled a directory of 12,700 painters, engravers, sculptors and architects, as well as mixed media, and graphic artists from 39 countries. Admittedly, some of the entries are sketchy, listing only birth and

death dates, medium worked in and a reference to another bibliographic source. However, others contain more complete biographical information, additional bibliographic references and a list of museums where the artist's work is collected. **Shipp** also includes a number of useful appendices starting with a list of artists by country, followed by a chronology of exhibitions, leading to lists of the museums and galleries referenced in the text. Finally, there is a complete bibliography of all of the sources listed in the various entries, with full citations.

While by no means perfect, *Latin American and Caribbean Artists of the Modern Era* is in some ways a groundbreaking work. With obvious commitment, it throws light on an emerging area of study. Author **Steve Shipp** shares his fascination with the topic, as well as his own personal research in this book. Libraries with patrons of a like mind and similar interests, will want to add it to their collections.

Most libraries are continually looking for accurate, authoritative sources on countries of the world. Here is one more useful title to add to the list. **Grey House Publishing** recently published the fourth edition of *Nations of the World: A Political, Economic and Business Handbook* (2003, 1-59237-006-3, \$145). Profiling 231 countries using an attractive layout, but still crammed with facts, *Nations of the World* differs somewhat from similar works with its emphasis on business and economic factors. Added to the typical country profile, a good deal of attention is paid to the economic environment and outlook, trade and tourism, industry and manu-

facturing, financial markets, banking and insurance and telecommunications. There is also information on entry requirements, security, and transportation to, and within the country. Sidebars highlight key facts and indicators and a basic country map is included. Future editions might consider improving these maps. They look like maps out of older versions of *Maps on File*, fine for copying and filling in, but not as thorough geographical representations. Rounding out the volume is a list of foreign embassies in the US, as well as regional overviews for Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East. *Nations of the World* offers both the business traveler and the interested undergraduate a handy, fact-filled and timely guide to countries worldwide. Public and academic libraries needing another country directory to complement the CIA's *World Factbook* (2003, 157488641X, \$34.95), as well as those unable to afford the *Europa Yearbook* (2003 1857431758, \$1150.00) will find *Nations of the World* a good choice. 🦉

